

# Terrifying Topics

Entrance task: Think: Why do you the witch-hunt craze was so rampant during the 16th and 17th centuries?

Today: The European Witch-hunts

Homework: Reading - The Hammer of Witches - identify the reasons women were targeted

## Changing Attitudes

Sexism in 16th century Europe

- Status of women declined
- Convents closed
- Prostitution became legal in some places
- Marriage = subservient role
- Witch hunts

## Some facts about the European Witch Hunts

1. Approximately 110,000 people were tried as witches between 1450-1750
2. 20-25% of those persecuted as witches were men.
3. Over 60,000 people were killed in this process.
4. Geographically, France, Germany, Switzerland had the largest number of witch trials; Spain, Italy, Portugal had the least

## Some facts about the European Witch Hunts

5. Protestants and Catholics were nearly equal overall in the persecution of witches.
6. Most witches were condemned by secular courts, not religious courts.
7. Older single and widowed women were the most common target.

## Some facts about the European Witch Hunts

The last witch executed in Europe was officially exonerated in August 2008. Beheaded in Switzerland in 1782, Anna Goeldi was found to have been determined guilty before her trial began.

## The European Witch Hunts

Why were women targeted?

1. A way to explain the inexplicable in an age of wonder
2. Women were considered spiritually weaker (Adam & Eve). Religious fervor.
3. Women were often midwives and nurses to the sick
4. Women were more likely to outlive their husbands - poor widows - and many did not age well . . .

## The European Witch Hunts

Why were women targeted?

5. Mysogyny - a general hatred of women
6. Greed and jealousy



## The Hammer of Witches

- Written in 1484 to challenge all arguments against the existence of witchcraft and to instruct magistrates on how to identify, interrogate and convict witches.

Q: Why were women most commonly targeted?

- Read the excerpt
- Be ready to discuss

# Homework

## The Hammer of Witches